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Editorial

What does it mean to believe in God? And what are the benefits of belief over non-belief? These are important questions for both those who profess to follow a faith and those who do not. Those who profess to believe in a religion would point to the teachings of their scriptures and the advice to be found therein as a direction or a prescription for the attainment of inner peace. One would expect belief to lead to spiritual advancement and this advancement would be apparent at an individual and at a collective level. At the individual level it should lead to contentment resulting out of the development of a relationship with the Creator and at a societal level it should lead to peace demonstrated by the way the individual behaves to others and comports himself.

In this issue of the *Review of Religions* there is a collection of extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah^(as), Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, entitled the 'Root of Islam'. The Promised Messiah^(as) writes:

'The first duty of a human being, therefore, is that he should correct the belief he has in God, that is he should prove through his deeds and actions that they are not against the glory of God or the commandments of God.'

True belief must be accompanied by the corresponding deeds. It is only by putting the teaching into practice that one can hope to develop spiritually. Otherwise professing a belief in God without understanding what this means is a hollow expression of faith.

The follower of a religion must also not be afraid to question his beliefs in the search for truth. In fact it is incumbent on the believer to search for the truth the important concept is that it is failure to accept the truth when faced with it, that is wrong. It is therefore important to understand what the real message is –there is a need for examining the available evidence and this means

going back to the original sources as far as possible and identifying the real essence of a belief as distinct from the decorations that may have become associated with it. In this issue there is an article entitled 'Knowledge and Truth'. From time to time, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV offers to people of all nationalities, faiths the opportunity to raise questions and issues of interest to them. This is the transcript of the answer given to some questions at one of these sessions. In this article it is stated: 'The sin is not to accept the truth when you see it. No other sin has any meaning apart from this particular sin. Every sin has an element of this particular sin within it. When a person sees the truth but does not recognise it, either in word or in deed, that is a sin.' This article goes on to explain the importance of engaging with people in particular the youth and explaining to them the real meaning of religion and how religion relates to society as a whole.

There are many people in the world today who feel the need for a leading a more purposeful existence. They recognize that there is more to life than the acquisition of material wealth. Some may recognize the importance of humanitarianism but they do not see the relevance of religion in society today. This may be the result of certain preconceived ideas about religion perhaps gained from past experiences. For example it is sometimes stated that religion causes war and conflict. Again, it is important to examine the actual doctrine and teachings of religion in order to remove misconceptions. An article on page 24 entitled 'The Need for Religion' addresses some of these issues and explains how 'Islam invites everyone to ponder over its teachings and question its merit and to believe in it only when one is thoroughly satisfied'. Further it discusses how religion '*through its moral and spiritual teachings reforms the lives of its followers and purifies their hearts*'.

Notes and Comments

The midlife crisis is a well known phenomena – that time in life when 40 and 50-somethings decide to change career, partners and or downshift. Commentators attribute this to a sense of stagnancy often based on a life review that reveals that the hopes and dreams that one had earlier in life have not been achieved. Given the fact that half of one's time is over, a feeling of desperation drives the individual to instigate radical life changes.

Now a new concept has entered the arena of human development – that of the quarter life crisis. According to authors Alexandra Robbins, and Abby Wilner, this refers to a twenty's something review of one's life. Unlike the midlife crisis its challenges are not about an increasing sense of predicable stability but rather that for the first time life is no longer predicable.

Robbins and Wilner argue that our first twenty years are clearly marked out – we are channelled down the route of trying to achieve a career. The goals are clear – achieve the highest or best in one's field. However once one enters the arena of work as an adult the goals are no longer clear.

'The revelation that life simply isn't easy-a given for some twenty-somethings, a mild inconvenience for

others, but a shattering blow for several –is one of the most distressing aspects of the quarterlife crisis particularly for individuals who do not have large support networks or who doubt themselves often.'

It is true that as a society we seem to expect relatively young people to achieve a lot. We also tend to write off individuals once they hit forty something years. So the pressure on achieving early in life is great. It is unsurprising then to find increasing levels of stress and depression in young people. Japanese society places a high value on achievement and hence suicides among the young who fail to get into good colleges are not uncommon and the trend is likely to spread internationally.

Our society has created high expectations for material success and not to achieve this is often seen as failure. The recent boom in dotcoms has resulted in many young people becoming very rich, very quickly. After all, it is today's twenty-somethings who are spear heading the electronic revolution. Many expect to make their first million within a few years of working in this field and then either to retire or go on to their second million. The speed at which this is happening is said to be creating a crisis in the industry as individuals who are in their most creative years leave. All of this leads to a

belief that if a person has not 'made it' by his or her mid-forties, that individual becomes a 'has been'. The converse is also a problem. The ones who do 'succeed' often do so at a cost and when they review this, some conclude that it was not worth it. The 'cost' is often one's family, friends and time for personal and spiritual development. When they are finally able to reflect on the 'cost' of their 'achievements' it is little wonder that they are driven to a 'crisis'.

The reality is that many people only start functioning at their best in their latter years. This is because they have experience, which they can use to enhance their capabilities. Learning is not confined to the first twenty years of life but continues throughout. From this perspective any kind of life crisis should not be necessary, because at every stage of development there is the opportunity to build upon past experiences and integrate this with new learning. This more rounded approach to life means that the metric of one's successes need no longer be measured in only material terms but also in social and personal achievements.

As parents it is easy to get caught up in over emphasizing academic achievement at the cost of preparing children adequately for their future lives which involve much more than academic or career success. Children also need to be brought up within a broader moral environment where emphasis is also placed on their actions and intentions. We need to educate them about what success

means and remove it from the confines of the material into a broader appreciation of the need for moral and spiritual development. This way they can be guided to learn to question and self reflect. Then at age twentysomething the framework is in place if there is any soul searching to be done. Parents also need to ask themselves why their children need to 'the best' or to have 'finished first' at some task. Does such an achievement reflect well on the child or is it the parent who is seeking approval and praise from *their* peer group? More broadly, is the pressure placed on a child to succeed about a parent's competitive tendencies?

In our current materialist society too little time is devoted to the family as people are working harder than ever to give their children 'a better quality of life'. We need to think carefully about the meaning of this 'better quality' if our children are not to miss out on learning about how to cope with life.

Sarah Waseem & Mansoor Saqi

'Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life in your Twenties'.
Robbins A and Wilner A May, 2001

Life in the Perspective of Qur'anic Revelations –

A brief introductory chapter

by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad

This is an extract taken from the book Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth written by the author.

The Holy Qur'an makes a wide range of observations covering the entire span of creative processes pertaining to both the evolution of life and the preparatory stages preceding it. Some of the observations have set landmarks of unique character and it is to them that we propose to draw the attention of the reader.

However, it should be kept in mind that the brief introductory passages which follow, comprise discussions which are fully elaborated in the relevant chapters.

Of prime importance to note are the guiding principles mentioned in the following verse:

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ * وَالَّذِي
خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْعَفُورُ * الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ
الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things;

It is He *Who has created death and life that He might try you - which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving, The Same Who has created seven heavens in stages (Tibaqan). No incongruity can you see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Do you see any flaw?*¹
(Ch.67, vs:2-4)

This is the principle verse which speaks of the plan of things covering the entire universe. The two fundamentals highlighted in this verse are as follows: a total absence of contradiction in the entire universe created by God and a stage by stage development of all that has been created. The latter is further elaborated in an attribute of God which is extensively used in the Holy Qur'an in relation to all creative processes. The word (*Rabb - a* in this word is pronounced like *u* in *but*) invariably means someone who continues to evolve something from a lower to a higher stage. When a foal, for instance, is raised to the state of a fully grown horse - with special care taken to improve its potential qualities - the Arabs use the expression (*R a b b - al-Fuluwwa*) meaning that someone has brought up and trained the foal excellently. Similarly, the same attribute *Al-Rabb* is often translated as 'The Provident'. This indicates that God the Creator also provides for all the subsequent stages of development of His creation. This leaves no doubt whatsoever as to the fact that the Qur'an speaks of creation only in step by step progressive stages which are well provided for, categorically rejecting the concept of spontaneous generation. Spontaneous generation is further rejected by the Qur'an because it violates the dignity of God. Thus the following verses enquire from man remonstratively:

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا * وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

What is the matter with you that you expect not wisdom and staidness from Allah?

While He has created you in different forms and ever varying states? ²
(Ch.71, vs:14-15)

The following verse from Surah Al-Inshiqaq addressing humans, promises them that theirs is a continuous journey of moving on from stage to stage:

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ

*That you shall assuredly pass on from one stage to another.*³
(Ch.84, v.20)

This is the all-embracing plan of Creation. At different stages of evolution, the processes that governed and shaped life were different but their direction remained the same – always pointing at man.

This is an important topic which has been the subject of much debate amongst various scientists and religious scholars who seek to unravel the mysteries of the origin of life. Various scenarios have been proposed and experiments carried out which attempt to simulate the conditions resulting in the creation of organisms billions of years ago from an entirely lifeless earth. To that we shall return later. Presently we propose to confine ourselves to a brief account of the Qur'anic concept of how life originated and evolved on earth. Some observations relevant to this subject have been gathered from various verses of the Holy Qur'an. This serves the double purpose of illustrating the role of the Qur'an in transferring parts of the 'unknown' to the realm of the known and to assist the specialists in this field of knowledge to benefit from Qur'anic guidance.

We shall begin by noting that many a time when the Qur'an speaks of some earlier forms of creation, it refers to them as the creation of man while whatever was created at that time had no semblance to him. In fact, all the landmarks of creation have been likewise referred to as human creations because right from the beginning it was man alone who was the ultimate object and purpose of the entire exercise of creation.

By way of example, we may consider the construction of an aeroplane for which many thousands of stages and processes are required. The designer

THE OVERALL SCENARIO AS PRESENTED BY THE HOLY QUR'AN ENVISIONS LIFE AS HAVING BEEN ADVANCED STEP BY STEP FROM DUST, FROM WATER, FROM CLAY AND ALSO FROM FERMENTING BLACKISH MUD WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED INTO DRY, RINGING CLAY. ...NO MAN OF THE ERA WHEN THE QUR'AN WAS REVEALED COULD EVEN REMOTELY RELATE THE CREATION OF MAN TO DRY RINGING CLAY MADE OUT OF STAGNANT MUD.

while planning its production treats every component – nuts, bolts, wings, seats and all – as the building of the aeroplane itself, which is the real object of this exercise. Nuts and bolts also have an independent purpose to serve other than just being the components of the plane. As such all the earlier stages are treated as merely preparatory to the consummation of the ultimate purpose. This aspect is highly essential to note because it is here that the Qur'an parts company with the biologists who believe in a haphazard evolution without a pre-set design. To these biologists the origin and evolution of life appear to have neither purpose nor design, nor a well-calculated plan of execution.

These various stages as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an shall now be introduced only briefly point by point but a fuller discussion will follow in the relevant chapters.

The Creation of Ancient Organisms

We begin with the most ancient creative phenomenon which existed prior to the biotic evolution as mentioned in the Qur'an. It is with reference to this age that it employs a specific term, the jinn. But in this context it is certainly not applicable to the word genie to which ordinarily the readers relate it.

Their concept of jinn (genie) as a ghostlike creature is largely superstitious. Such superstitions would have us believe that the jinn possess a mixture of part human and part hobgoblin characteristics, which can adopt as many shapes and forms as they please. They are particularly prone to haunt and

possess women and the weak. They can be mastered by the so-called divines who enjoy the knowledge of such verses from various scriptures as press the jinn into their service. Once subjugated, the jinn can perform fantastic tasks at their command such as materialising anything they like out of thin air. Through the jinn they can gain control over their loved ones or acquire power to annihilate their enemies. The Qur'an most certainly does not speak of this superstitious human fantasy when it speaks of the pre-biotic age with reference to the jinn. Of that the reader will be given a full account in the chapter The Jinn.

The Role of Clay

In the Qur'an, dry dust or wet clay are also repeatedly mentioned as stages through which life passed in ancient times. In Surah Al-Imran, it states:

خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

... He created him (Adam) out of dust (turab)...⁴
(Ch.3, v.60)

On the same subject we read the following:

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ

... He created you from clay (humid or moist earth) ...⁵
(Ch.6, v.3)

Clay is also mentioned in Surah Al-Rahman, but this time it is not wet clay which is referred to for it is clearly stated:

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ

He created man from dry ringing clay like pieces of pottery.⁶
(Ch.55, v.15)

Here its quality is described as having a plate-like appearance dry enough to create ringing sounds, like broken pieces of pottery. Again in Surah Al-Hijr, clay is mentioned three times with the added qualification that man is created from dry ringing clay, formed out of dark fermenting mud.*

The overall scenario as presented by the Holy Qur'an envisions life as having been advanced step by step from dust, from water, from clay and also from fermenting blackish mud which subsequently turned into dry, ringing clay. These last two stages attract particular attention. No man of the era when the Qur'an was revealed could even remotely relate the creation of man to dry ringing clay made out of stagnant mud.*

Later on we shall present a brief account of what scientists say in relation to this subject. The reader is at liberty to draw his own conclusions regarding the compatibility of Qur'anic statements with the outcome of contemporary research. One is the scenario presented by the Qur'an based entirely on Divine revelation; the other is the scenario composed of various theories, claims and assertions made by many scientists who have devoted their lives to the study of the origin of life entirely on the basis of scientific investigation. Every time the conclusions of scientists are found to be well-established, the reader will also find them to be in perfect agreement with Qur'anic statements. This will be so despite the fact that, at the time of the Qur'anic revelation, science had not yet advanced enough to investigate the mysteries of life and its origin. The purpose of such verses is to particularly address man of a later scientific age, so that his belief in the existence of an All-Knowing Supreme Creator is aided by the knowledge he has gained.

Survival by Accident or Design?

On the issue of survival the Qur'anic view is diametrically opposed to that of the naturalists.

According to the Qur'an, accidents play no major role in the survival of species or individuals. Not only species but also individuals are well protected from a host of impending dangers, constantly surrounding them,

* (The Holy Qur'an: Ch.15:v.27, 29, 34)

threatening extinction at every moment of their lives. Hence their survival is in no way accidental. Instead it is a well-chalked out, well-preserved and well-implemented protective design which is in operation throughout the history of life. Among many relevant Qur'anic verses we choose the following to illustrate the case in point:

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيصُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ * عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرِ
الْمُتَعَالِ * سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ مَن أَسْرَأَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَن جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَن هُوَ
مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ * لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ
وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

Allah knows what each female womb bears and whatever they secrete and reject therefrom and whatever they fostered to grow. And with Him everything has a proper measure.

He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the incomparably Great, the Most High.

Equal are in His sight those of You who speak secretly and those who speak up aloud. Also those who move about under the cover of night and those who walk openly during the day. For each of them there are sentinels in front of him and behind him, to protect him by the command of Allah ...⁷

(Ch.13, Vs:9-12)

Sidedness or Chirality in Nature

Among all the scriptures, the Qur'an is unique in highlighting the issue of sidedness in relation to socio-religious behaviour. One is surprised to read any significance attached to the right or the left. The same is observed in the conduct and instructions of the Holy Prophet(sa) where the right and left are each portrayed as playing a specialised role in a Muslim's conduct. For

instance, the right hand is selected for all good things and clean acts; one should eat with the right hand, one should start serving from the right side, one should not touch any filthy object with the right hand etc. The opposite applies to the left hand. Incidentally, when one shakes hands with a Muslim, he should be confident that he is shaking a hand which is clean. In the comparative fuller discussions of sidedness and chirality, the reader will come across amazing disclosures regarding the phenomenon of sidedness as observed in nature. The reader should bear in mind that this is strongly suggestive of the sameness of the Author of the Qur'an and the Creator of the universe.

The expression 'partiality' is generally used to indicate that a choice is made without specific reasons leading to that choice. However, in application to God, one's lack of knowledge as to why God is partial to sidedness does not necessarily mean that there is no hidden reason for His selective behaviour.

As science continues to delve deeper and deeper into the understanding of the chain of cause and effect, many hitherto inexplicable patterns of natural behaviour are being understood.

Natural Selection and Survival of the Fittest

Without ambiguity the Qur'an repeatedly declares that at every step of creation choices had to be made and each time the selector was not the blind operator of natural selection, but the hand of God, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing. Again it is specifically and categorically declared:

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*And thy Lord creates whatever He pleases and chooses whomsoever He pleases. It is not for them to choose. Glorified be Allah, and far is He above all that they associate with Him.*⁸

(Ch.28, v.69)

The same assertion runs through the following verses:

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ * أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ * ءَأَنْتُمْ
تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ * نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ * عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ * وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ * أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا
تَحْرُثُونَ * ءَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ * لَوْ نَشَاءُ
لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ * إِنَّا لَمُعْرِمُونَ * بَلْ نَحْنُ
مَحْرُومُونَ * أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ * ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ
مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ * لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا
تَشْكُرُونَ * أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ * ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ
شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ * نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذَكِّرَةً وَآمِنًا
لِلْمُقِيمِينَ *

We have created you. Why, then, do you not accept the truth?

What think you of the sperm-drop that you emit?

Is it you who created it or are We the Creator?

We have ordained death for all of you; and We cannot be prevented.

From bringing in your place others like you, and from developing you into a form which at present you know not.

And you have certainly known the first creation. Why then, do you not reflect?

Do you see what you sow?

*Is it you who grow it or are We the Grower?
If We so pleased, We could reduce it all to broken pieces, then you would
keep lamenting:
'We are ruined!
'Nay, we are deprived of everything'.
Do you see the water which you drink?
Is it you who send it down from the clouds, or are We the Sender?
If We so pleased, We could make it bitter. Why, then, are you not grateful?
Do you see the fire which you kindle?
Is it you who produce the tree for it, or are We the Producer?
We have made it a reminder and a benefit for the wayfarers.⁹
(Ch.56, vs:58-74)*

These verses draw the attention of man repeatedly and emphatically to the fact that it is God Who is the Creator, and it is He alone Who makes choices. The decision making is not left to chance, nor to the things which are themselves being created. At every such moment it is God Who makes the choice and operates as the Supreme Selector.

There is no blind haphazard selection of characters as life evolves. It is God who through the trials between life and death makes it possible for life to evolve in its character, design, style and mode of survival. In this grand scheme of things there is no flaw whatsoever because it is He Who governs from the seat of His majesty with absolute wisdom. Nowhere in His creation can one find any flaw or contradiction. The import of these verses is manifestly clear.

In the Darwinian hypothesis of The Survival of the Fittest as we shall discuss later, there is no guarantee for a flawless operation which must always result in the survival of the fittest. On the contrary, some of those animals which may survive in the struggle may be fit only to survive that particular challenge. As far as the more evolved qualities of life are concerned however, the mere survival of an animal in a given situation certainly does not offer a guarantee that with it these qualities will also be preserved. This is so because there is no room for a Conscious Selector in that scheme,

capable of invariably choosing better characters emerging during the struggle between life and death. The Qur'anic vision of creation speaks of a universally flawless operative system, controlled to its finest detail so there is not the least chance of flaws and defects stealing their way into this scheme of things:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ *
الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْعَفُورُ * الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَىٰ فِيهَا خَلْقَ
الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفْوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ * ثُمَّ
ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things;

It is He Who has created death and life that He might try you - which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving,

The Same Who has created seven heavens in stages. No incongruity can you see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Do you see any flaw?

*Aye, look again, and yet again, your sight will only return to you tired and fatigued.*¹⁰

(Ch.67, Vs: 2-5)

A Game of Chess or a Game of Chance!

Some of the verses mentioned above, deal with the same subject creating the scenario of a guiding hand of a planner who plans and executes with absolute adroitness and dexterity. Each creature on the vast chequerboard of creation is moved square after square to a predetermined destination. This vision of creation leaves no room for an ungoverned and unguided course of evolution. In fact the entire scheme of things, both biotic and pre-biotic, is

sketched by the Holy Qur'an as a coherent plan of order completely devoid of chaos.

Building the same theme of universal order, the Qur'an rejects the possibility of there being another God who would certainly have clashed with his adversary turning the order we observe into disorder.

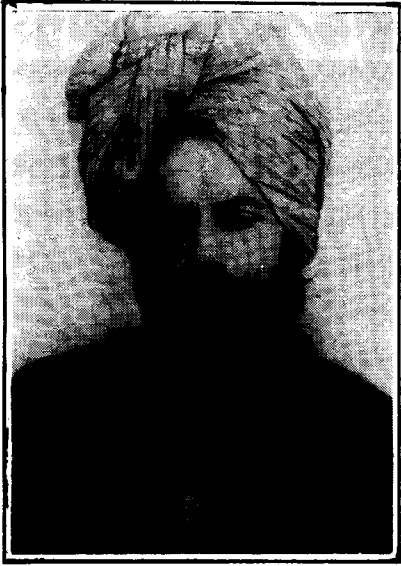
So far the discussion has been introductory, now we are ready for a detailed examination of the same subjects, chapter by chapter and category by category.



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2. Translation of 71:14-15 by the author.
3. Translation of 84:20 by Maulawi Sher Ali.
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6. Translation of 55:15 by the author.
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The Root of Islam



Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)
(The Promised Messiah and Mahdi)

Presented below is a compilation of extracts which have been taken from the speeches and discourses of **Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad** of Qadian, the Promised Messiah^(as) and Mahdi, as recorded in the collection entitled *Malfoozat*.

Compiled and translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

(Translator's note: All references to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic as they occur in the text. The English translation, presented in italics, is taken from the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra). Where the Promised Messiah^(as) has himself stated a certain interpretation of the Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text).

Belief in God is of two types. One is belief which is limited to the tongue and which has no influence on actions or deeds. The other type of belief is one that carries with it the testimony of deeds. So, until the second type of belief develops, I cannot say that a person believes in God. I cannot understand a situation where a person claims to have a belief in God, yet he commits sins. A large part of the world is made up of people who have belief of the first type. They declare that they believe in God, but at the same time they are engulfed by the impurities of the world and are steeped in the evils of sin. What then is the reason that a belief in God's existence does not lead to the result which is specific to

such a belief? (It is commonly observed) that a person does not dare to take that which belongs to even the lowliest person in his presence. How, then, is it the case that there is so much opposition to God and such courage is shown in

amount of this poison can kill. Why then, having acquired a belief in God, will he not derive the conclusions which pertain to that belief? If belief in God equals even that belief which one has in arsenic, then a person's emotions and desires

THE NATURE OF TRUE BELIEF IS SUCH THAT IT KILLS THE SELFISH DESIRES OF A HUMAN BEING AND IT SUPPRESSES THE INCLINATION TOWARDS SIN.

disobedience to His laws while declarations are made (by the same people about their belief in the existence of God). I accept that a great many people of the world assert in their own tongue that they believe in a Supreme Being. Some call Him 'Parmaishar', others call Him 'God', and others refer to Him by different names. However, when this professed belief of theirs is tested and examined, it has to be said that it is a mere claim that is not supported by any actions or deeds.

It is in the nature of man that he wishes to avoid the harm and to gain from the benefits of whatever he believes in. For example, arsenic is a poison and a person does not even taste it as he knows that a small

would turn cold and a death would come over them. Instead, however, we have to accept that [such declarations of faith] are mere utterances - belief has not acquired the colours of certainty. Hence such a person is deceived and deceives his own self when he states: 'I believe in God'.

The first duty of a human being, therefore, is that he should correct the belief he has in God, that is he should prove through his deeds and actions that they are not against the glory of God or the commandments of God. The deception whereby a person states that he believes in God, despite the fact there is no testimony of his deeds to that effect, is a kind of illness and a very serious

illness at that!

(*Malfoozat*, Vol 4, p.312)

The nature of true belief is such that it kills the selfish desires of a human being and it suppresses the inclination towards sin. Your question should be: 'What is the remedy for avoiding sins'? I can never accept that belief and sin can exist together. Belief is a light before which the darkness of sin cannot stand. Can it ever be that there is daylight as well as darkness of night? The real question then remains as to how we can safeguard ourselves against sin? Its remedy is that which I have just described, that there should develop a true belief in God.

(*Malfoozat*, Vol 4, p.314).

The truth is that until belief is accompanied by the testimony of actions and deeds, it is self-deception to state that one believes. True belief does not allow sin to remain. [The question then arises as to] how true belief is to develop? You should remember that when a patient visits a physician and the physician suggests a remedy, having examined his illness, it is the duty of the physician to warn the patient. Whether the patient takes up the

remedy or not is his own responsibility, not the physician's. Likewise, I state that it is up to the people themselves to decide whether or not to act upon the true spiritual remedy.

In short, the reality is that God cannot be seen by the physical eyes nor can we feel Him with other senses. If God was of the perceptible realm for which the senses have been created, then without doubt He would be visible or we could perceive Him. However, of the senses none is needed for knowing God. There exist special means and other kinds of senses for identifying Him. Wise men and Brahmans and philosophers have all tried but in vain. The belief which creates a surprising change in a person's life was never attained by them. When such was their own condition, how could they serve as a guide for others? Those who are themselves engulfed by difficulties and who do not themselves have any satisfaction or peace, how could they be a source of satisfaction for others?

The torches that are lit on this path are the Prophets (peace be upon them). Hence, if a person wishes to acquire the light of belief, it is his

duty to find the correct path and walk upon it. Without this it is not possible to attain nearness to God and true spiritual knowledge which safeguards against sin. It is for every person to decide for himself as to which pursuit creates true belief and spiritual knowledge. It is true that when a person treads on the path of truth, he does face difficulties and tribulations. Fear of the family, of the neighbourhood, and of the nation as a whole threaten him. But if he in reality loves the truth and holds it dear then he does eventually escape from the difficulties. Otherwise tribulations make manifest his hypocrisy. It is necessary for a believer to become frenzied (with belief) and not care for any humiliation in the path of truth. As long as he is imprisoned by these aspects [of fear of admonishment from his peers], he cannot be a believer.

(Malfoozat, Vol 4, pp.314 -315)

Remember this well that if a person states that he believes God to be One, without any partners, and also believes in the Holy Prophet of Islam and likewise believes in other matters of faith, but if the declaration is limited only to being a verbal statement and the heart does

A PERSON CAN DECEIVE OTHERS WHO CAN BE DECEIVED BY HIS OBSERVANCE OF FIVE DAILY PRAYERS OR SOME OTHER GOOD DEEDS, BUT GOD CANNOT BE DECEIVED. THEREFORE, GOOD DEEDS SHOULD BE PERFORMED WITH A GENUINE FEELING. THIS IS THE ONE THING THAT ADDS BEAUTY TO ONE'S DEEDS AND ENHANCES THEM.

not acknowledge it, then these will be mere utterances that cannot lead to deliverance. Deliverance cannot be attained until such time as the heart believes and this is manifested only when deeds and actions testify to it. Until this is achieved nothing is of any use.

I state the truth that the real objective is achieved only when one turns to God, having left all other diversions to one side, when religion is given true priority over the actualities of this world. Remember! A person can deceive others who can be deceived by his observance of five daily prayers or some other

good deeds, but God cannot be deceived. Therefore, good deeds should be performed with a genuine feeling. This is the one thing that adds beauty to one's deeds and enhances them.

It should be remembered what the *Kalima*, which we [as Muslims] recite daily, means? The *Kalima* means that a person affirms verbally and testifies with his heart that for him the One who is worthy of worship and love, and the One who is the desired objective is God Almighty and none other besides Him. The word 'Ilaha' has the meaning of being 'the beloved', 'the true objective', 'the one who is worshipped'. This declaration (of the *Kalima*) is, in a concise form, the whole teaching of the Holy Qur'an that has been taught to the Muslims. As it is not easy to remember a great and detailed book, this *Kalima* has been taught so that a person can keep the essence of Islamic teaching constantly in mind. The truth is that until this reality develops within a person there is no deliverance. That is why the Holy Prophet of Islam has said: 'He who declares there is no God but Allah will enter Paradise'. He who truly believes in '*La Ilaha illallah*' (there is no God

except Allah), such a person will enter paradise.

People deceive themselves if they think that a parrot-like repetition of the words will grant them entry into paradise. If that were the only reality to be found in it then all deeds would become redundant and useless and the *Shari'a* (religious law) would (God forbid) be deemed irrelevant. This, however, is not the case. The reality of this is that the meaning that is contained within it should enter the heart in practice. When this occurs then a person in fact enters paradise. It is not after death but in this very life that such a person is in paradise. It is a true fact and is easily understood that when there remains no other beloved for a human being besides God and no other objective, then no pain or sorrow can trouble him. Such is the lofty station that is granted to those who create a true change in themselves and those who attain to spiritual heights,
(*Malfoozat*, Vol 9, pp.102 – 104].

Remember that the blessings of *Tauheed*, (belief in the Unity of God), cannot be attained by the mere declaration of such a belief.

The true blessings of *Tauheed* are experienced and attained only when its other requirement is fulfilled, through the practice of virtuous deeds.

It is true that belief in the Unity of God is an excellent belief and one that a true and God fearing Muslim should certainly adopt but for the completion of this belief there is yet another aspect and that is love of God. The true purpose of the teaching of the Holy Qur'an is this that just as God is the One and Only God, so He should also become the one and only Being from the point of view of love – (that is God should become the object of one's total love). This has always been the true objective of all the Prophets that have gone before. Hence the declaration of *La Ilaha illallah*, that is, *There is no God but Allah*, while on the one hand prescribes the teaching of Unity of God, on the other it teaches that for the complete fulfillment of this belief there is the requirement of love. As I have just stated, this is such a beautiful and profound statement that the like of it is not to be found in the Torah or the Gospels nor indeed has any other book in the world provided such a complete teaching.

The meaning of the term *Ilaha* is that of a beloved who is worshiped. Hence, that which forms the root of Islam fulfills totally the meaning of Love. Remember, *Tauheed* that is devoid of love is faulty and incomplete.

(*Malfoozat*, Vol. 3. p.187)

Those who understand the true meaning of 'Tauheed' – (Unity of God), are few indeed. However, when people are reminded they instantly reply that are they not Muslims and do they not recite the *Kalima*? What is regrettable is that they have considered it sufficient merely to recite the *Kalima* with their lips. I say this with complete certainty that if a person becomes aware of the reality of *Kalima Tayyeba*, (the declaration, 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His servant') and if he adheres to it in practice, then he could achieve great progress and could witness the most wonderful manifestations of God's power.

Understand this matter well that I stand here before you not as some ordinary speaker delivering a sermon, nor am I here standing here to tell a story. I have to deliver the

message which God has vouchsafed to me. It does not concern me whether anyone listens to it or not, whether someone believes in it or not. You yourselves will be answerable for that. I have to fulfil my duty. I am aware that there are many who have entered my Community and they believe in *Tauheed* (Unity of God) but I am sorry to say that they do not in fact believe in this. He who usurps the right of his brother or is dishonest or does not abstain from all manner of immoralities, such a person is not in my view a believer of *Tauheed*. A belief in the Unity of God is such a blessing that when a person acquires it, there comes upon him an unusual change. The 'idols' of rancour, ill feelings towards others, jealousy, pretence and the like no longer remain and he comes closer to God. Until such time as the inner 'idols' of pride, selfishness display, rancour and animosity, jealousy and meanness, malice and dishonesty etc., actually depart, they remain within. Until such time (as these leave) how can a person be said to be true in his declaration of *La Ilaha illallah* (There is no God but Allah) because there is in such a person negation of complete trust in God. Thus, it is a certain fact that the mere recitation of the belief that

God is alone, without any partners, cannot be of any benefit. One minute a person is reciting the *Kalima* and the next minute, at the slightest provocation, he turns to anger and wrath as his 'gods'. (*Malfoozat*, Vol 9, pp.106 - 107)..

I have stated this repeatedly that the real root of Islam is in the Unity of God, that is, there should be nothing in a person besides God and that he should not be like those who, when faced with some misfortune, accuse God and his Prophets. No matter what pain or tribulation a person has to face, there should be no complaint. Whatever affliction comes upon a person, it comes as a result of the state of his own self. God is not cruel. It is true that from time to time truthful people too suffer trials and others take these to be affliction. In truth, it is not an affliction they face – what they, in fact, have is blessing disguised as sorrow which enables them to develop their relationship with God further and through this they attain a loftier station. (*Malfoozat*, Vol 9, p.117)



The Need for Religion

The following is based on the text of a short speech of Maulana Ataul Mujeeb Rashed, Imam of the London Mosque. The Japanese translation of this speech was presented at the Annual Gathering of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at held in Nagoya on 5th May 2001

First of all I would like to thank God Almighty who has given me the opportunity to express my views on what is a very important subject, that is, 'The need of Religion and the benefits of having a belief in Religion'. This is no doubt a very important subject and it can rightly be called the subject of the day – people in general and youth in particular raise this question very often – they say why should we believe in any religion, why lose our freedom and come under the rule of religion? They also say that religion as they know, has done more harm to people than the benefits it has given to them. I will try to deal with these objections against religion, one by one, according to the teachings of Islam and also on the basis of reason and logic. But permit me first to say a few things about religion in general.

Different people have defined religion differently. I believe that the

guidance, which originates from the source of our Creator, the Godhead, for the benefit of mankind can be called religion. According to this definition, any set of rules of life, which originate from human beings cannot be called religion. It is belief in God that is the real basis of a religion. I believe that just as our Creator, Allah Almighty, provided us with all the necessary things even before we came into being (such as air, water, light, mothers milk when we were born, etc) similarly He has provided from time immemorial spiritual guidance which is so much needed by human beings. This spiritual guidance is needed in order to know, appreciate and believe in God and to develop a close relationship with our Creator and Maker. This is a universal phenomenon and we know that this type of belief has been found in all societies and at all stages of human history.

There are certain so-called 'reasons', which are presented by

those who do not believe in the need for religion. For example, some say that we should not have any religion because there is a lot of fighting and bloodshed because of religion. This statement is not true. If you look realistically the people killed in religious battles are only a small percentage of those killed in other conflicts. But the real answer is that religion has never taught its followers to fight and to shed blood. All religions have always preached love and peace. Islam literally means peace. I agree that sometimes the followers of some religions, including unfortunately Muslims, have indulged in unnecessary fighting. But I would like to stress that in such cases the blame should go to those who call themselves the followers of a certain religion but in practice have rejected the peaceful teachings of that religion. If these people criticize religion because of it then why do they not also reject science and scientific development for the same reason as it has resulted in the production of weapons of mass destruction?

Then some people describe religion as the opium of the masses, which stands in the way of mental development and progress. This may

apply to a religion that does not employ any reason and logic and does not promote open and free discussion on its doctrines and practices. This certainly is not the case of Islam, which has stressed again and again in the Holy Quran that people should not have blind faith. Islam invites everyone to ponder over its teachings and question its merit and to believe in it only when one is thoroughly satisfied. Islam openly says that there is no compulsion in religion. This is the true concept of a religion, which is from God Almighty. I am sure that in view of this explanation this allegation does not remain valid any more.

As far as Islam is concerned I can say with full certainty that it strongly promotes knowledge and reasoning. According to Islam, science is the act of God while religion is the word of God. There is no contradiction between the two. It is repeatedly stated in the Holy Quran that the wonderful creation of God, big or small, is so marvellous and unique that it clearly points to a Creator and Maker. And this belief in God is the basis of religion.

It is also said that religion does not

cope with a changing world and does not fulfil the requirements of modern changing times. This may be true in the case of such religions in the past, which were meant for a limited period and aimed for a specific people. But this does not apply to a universal religion, which is designed by God for all people and for all times to come. This is exactly what Islam is – being a global and universal religion for all times its teachings are complete and well protected. It claims to be the summit of religion. Its teachings are such that they provide full guidance and answers to all questions raised by modern man.

I have mentioned a few objections against religion by way of example. As a general comment on all such objections I would like to say that these are all a result of experiences with such religions that had a limited scope and limited objectives to achieve. As such these objections do not really apply to Islam and I have mentioned briefly how hollow these objections become when seen in the light of Islam, the perfect religion of all times.

Now I turn to the positive aspects of this vital question of the need for

religion. When I speak of religion, my perception is that it means a perfect code of conduct and a complete guidance from God Almighty. With this simple definition of religion, the answer becomes very easy and clear. We observe around us that in each country and in every society there are always some rules and regulations. These are considered necessary and essential in order to make our lives enjoyable and purposeful. These rules define our rights and responsibilities and everyone is required to follow these to ensure the establishment of a harmonious society. The need of such rules and regulations is universally accepted and acknowledged. I would say that, more than these worldly rules and regulations, we stand in need of spiritual rules and regulations. This is exactly the concept of religion – a spiritual guidance that comes from God Almighty. Man-made worldly rules may be defective and contradictory and in many cases may be unable to achieve their objectives. But this is not the case with rules and regulations made by God Almighty. He is the one Who has created mankind; He knows our needs and He can guide us as to

what is good or bad for us. His knowledge is perfect and profound. Therefore the guidance from God (i.e. religion) is something that is most useful for mankind – something we cannot really live without.

Moreover, we need religion to find more about God. It is God Who can tell us Who He is. No one can describe God better than God Himself. With this knowledge of God, which is given to us by religion, we can understand God better. We can develop a relationship with Him and we can also attain nearness to Him. Apart from that, belief in God, given to us by religion, bestows upon us the mental satisfaction, which is the greatest bliss of our life. This peace and happiness of mind is the greatest achievement of life. The low rate of suicide among believers of God is a glaring proof of this.

As far as the benefits of believing in religion are concerned, they are immeasurable. No religion preaches fighting or violence. Therefore if the followers of religion follow the teachings of their religion truly, the establishment of universal peace will be the natural outcome.

Religion also defines the rights and responsibilities of all – thus leading to the establishment of a peaceful and harmonious society. Religion, through its moral and spiritual teachings reforms the lives of its followers and purifies their hearts.

Worldly rules and laws are confined to geographical boundaries. The benefit of these, therefore, is confined to limited people living in a specific area. Religion on the other hand knows not any such boundaries. If the religion is universal, as Islam is, then its impact and reformation goes to all people in all parts of the globe. This eventually results in an international brotherhood. Moreover, in the religion of Islam, all humans are treated equally, enjoying equal rights and responsibilities. This factor goes a long way to bring people together and closer to one another. Furthermore it bridges the gap between rich and poor and does away with all trends of discrimination in society.

Mankind has an inborn desire of attaining progress and developing his capacities to the maximum. Religion promotes this desire and declares the door to find God and to

move forward in the field of spirituality is always wide open for all men and women. The journey towards God never ends and there is no end to mankind's progress in this field. The true religion, as such, has an open invitation for all, for all

times to come, to go on competing with one another in this noble race of spirituality and morality. May Allah enable us to understand these points and to choose and follow the correct religion.



No compulsion in matters of religion	<i>There should be no compulsion in religion. (Ch.2: v.257)</i>
Importance of knowledge and reasoning	<i>Say, 'Can those who know and those who do not be equal' (Ch.39: v.10) Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah. (Ch.32: v.29)</i>
Guarantee of safeguarding the text of the Holy Qur'an	<i>Verily We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian. (Ch.15:v.10)</i>
Islam – the summit of religious evolution	<i>This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion (Ch.2: v.4)</i>
Islam emphasizes the equality of man	<i>O mankind, we have created you from male and female; and We have made you into clans and tribes that you may recognise one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Ch.49: v.14)</i>

Knowledge and Truth

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, from time to time offers to people of all nationalities, faiths and beliefs the opportunity of raising questions and issues that may be of interest to them. Presented below is the answer given to a question raised in a session held in Glasgow on 9th April 1988.

[Note: All reference to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic, where possible. The English translation, presented in italics, is taken from translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra)].

Transcribed by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

Questioner:

I have a non-Ahmadi Muslim friend who says that to doubt his religion is a sin and I find it difficult to introduce him to new ideas in religious discussion as he feels guilty. How can I get round this problem?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

As far as I understand your question, it seems that your friend says that he would be committing a sin if he doubted his religion. However, if he did not doubt his religion, despite the fact that it was proved to be wrong, would that not be a greater sin? This is the principal issue that has to be resolved. The sin is not to accept the truth when you see it. No other sin has any meaning apart from this particular sin. Every sin has an element of this particular sin

within it. When a person sees the truth but does not recognise it, either in word or in deed, that is a sin. So, just tell him that religions are true in their beginnings but when they are distorted later on by their own followers and begin to deviate from the pristine purity of the original religion then it is a sin to hold fast to them. It is a sin to hold on to beliefs despite the fact that it has been pointed out that what is being held on to is not a religion that has been revealed by God but to a distorted form of that religion. This is the issue that you should take up with such people. For example, to Christians you should say, 'I do not come here to prove the falsehood of Christianity – I believe in Christianity. In fact, I feel that I am a better Christian because I know the real Christ who was a reality in

history, not a myth. So, as such, out of my love for Christ and for true Christianity, I wish to deliver to you the message that you have deviated. This is the only issue of debate, so let us discuss it. If I prove that you have deviated from the real religion of Christianity then it would be a sin not to turn back to original Christianity and from there on you can start your discussion.

Questioner:

My question relates to the use of the term *Al Kitab*. In the Holy Qur'an, in the same Chapter, i.e. al Baqarah, reference has been made to the Holy Qur'an both as *Al Kitab*, i.e. the Book, and as *Al Qur'an*. Why is this so?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

You should also note that the Holy Qur'an refers to the New and Old Testaments also by name as well as referring to them by the term *Al Kitab*. This is to indicate that *Al Kitab* is a common term, which is not specific to the Holy Qur'an but is applicable to all holy books in which Law has been revealed. Sometimes the general name is mentioned and sometimes the particular name has been used to

relate the two. Firstly, the term *Al Kitab* speaks of the Holy Qur'an as a Holy Book and secondly the title *Al Qur'an* tells us that this is the Book that has a particular name and title of *Al Qur'an*.

Questioner:

My question relates to Christianity. In Ahmadiyyat we learn that Jesus^(as) is a reality but there is a confusion in my mind regarding the sayings of Jesus that, '*I have come not to destroy but to fulfil*', and that, '*There are no new things under the heaven*'. My question is that given these statements, how is it that he brought a new Book, *Injeel*?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

You know that there are many books contained in the Old Testament that came after the Torah. Both David and Solomon came after the Torah was revealed to Moses^(as) and all the Books of David and Solomon form part of the Old Testament. However, did either of them bring a new religion? Of all the prophets who came after Moses^(as) and whose Books form part of the Old Testament, did any of them bring a new religion after Moses^(as)? It is commonly accepted that this was

not the case. Why, then, should one limit such a question to Jesus^(as) alone? Earlier prophets of the Old Testament who came after Moses^(as) and who were given Books, did not bring a new religion and in the same manner, Jesus^(as), too, did not bring a new religion.

Regarding the second statement of Jesus^(as), 'There are no new things under the heaven' – what is meant by this is that the principles of the universe remain the same and as such you should not expect any surprises in the ways of God. What he says is very similar to that which has been stated in the Holy Qur'an in the following terms:

فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ
تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ
لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا

But thou wilt never find any change in the way of Allah; nor wilt thou ever find any alteration in the way of Allah
(Ch.35: vs. 44).

That is, you will never find any change in the established funda-

mental ways of God. Here *Sunna*, i.e. the way of God, is not just an ordinary expression of practice, it is the long established way of God. This is what Jesus^(as) spoke of and there are many *Sunna* applicable to the prophets. What Jesus^(as) was trying to indicate to his opponents was that they could not expect him to be different from earlier prophets when the set traditions and set paths applied to them [as they will apply to him]. That is to say, given God's practice in His relationship with His prophets, Jesus^(as) too was to be treated in the same tradition. In this statement Jesus^(as) was giving expression to the fact that his opponents should not judge him on their expectations that were not in line with the traditions of earlier prophets – he should be judged in accordance with earlier traditions of how God related to His prophets.

Questioner:

Today we are exposed to a wide range of factors and forces that influence our attitudes and our thinking and incline our thinking one way or another. At a time when the media has very impressive 'brain-bending' techniques and it channels our attitudes in certain

directions. At such times this kind of influence of the media makes many people doubtful of the traditional values and traditional beliefs as well as the traditional 'isms'. Being caught in this type of dilemma, I wonder if there is any other technique, any other method of prayer that could perhaps tilt the thinking of the children who are constantly exposed to views that are diametrically opposed and yet can be very convincing?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

The simplest answer to this question is to face the problem head on and never shun it or run away from it. Unless such an approach is adopted, one will never be able to handle these problems successfully. When I came to England two years ago, I found that many issues of the nature you are referring to, agitated minds of the youth. I found also to my horror that there existed no machinery or apparatus within our Community to tackle this problem. I was, therefore, left with no option but to sit for long hours with the Ahmadi youth in the Mosque. This took place on a continuous basis for about eight months. We sat together for an hour and a half, sometimes two or three hours and I gave them the opportunity to air their views

about whatever was agitating them. In this way, when the doubts, suspicions and lurking fears were aired, this in itself seemed to help them. In dealing with their questions and concerns, I did not allow the authority of my position to impinge upon these sessions. I dealt with their questions frankly and openly and tried to convince them on their own terms. The response to this was that very rapidly the whole attitude of the youth in the UK began to change from one of apathy to one of enthusiastic interest. The result is that today you will be surprised to find that among the Ahmadi youth in the UK, the quality of active participation in everything good that we demanded of them is so wonderful and amazing that very few other countries can equal them in this regard. In some ways they are better trained and more willing people than will be found per capita in many areas of Pakistan – and that is saying a great deal. Such an approach is the only answer to this problem.

The problem we face is two-fold. On the one hand, education of the young is on a rational and scientific basis yet the propaganda that the questioner spoke of is gradually bombarded upon them from all sides

in such a casual way as if nothing was designed. There are many views that come to the young from hearing about scientific advances and discoveries. Apart from science, there are various other theories such as social theories and genetic theories that relate to society at large. There are theories that speak of liberation of man as such – ‘why should man do anything at all’ – philosophies that speak against traditionalism and the shackles that are formed by certain rights of others. These large questions seem to impinge upon everything. So, one must approach the problem with the same weapons – of open-mindedness and allowing freedom of expression to all. One should approach the problem in the same style and in the same manner and with the same ‘technology’ as used by the opposing forces. I have found the youth as well as the older generation of Ahmadis, and even the non-Muslims, responding to this approach very positively. At times it is quite amazing to see how rapidly some people change their stance and their views.

On various occasions, for instance, we have invited non-Muslim ladies in London and elsewhere to speak out on whatever matters that may be

causing them concern in society regarding the rights of women and its relationship to Islamic issues. Such ladies have always been very forthright and of course it is so because they are trained in this way. I have also been forthright in my answers without being at all agitated about the objections they raise. I take it in my stride and try to resolve the problem. Answers to such concerns must be tailored to the person raising the question and this is achieved by judging and measuring the person who raises the question. Every answer cannot satisfy everybody. This is also something very important and I frequently remind the Ahmadies never to forget this point. The minted answers do not work and you have to address the problem on its merits, particularly in modern times.

What is really needed is that the Ahmadis should have a deeper understanding of Islam. This is where, most unfortunately, many Ahmadi youth and others are lacking. They know the structure of Islamic teaching; they know the form of Islamic teaching but, unfortunately, they do not know the wisdom behind that teaching, or the philosophy that controls a teaching in principle. Once you delve deeper

into the meaning of Islam and understand the philosophy then nothing at all is difficult to confront. It is impossible then for anything to come your way that you cannot resolve.

The Promised Messiah^(as), (Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian), was very emphatic about this point. He had not read any of the modern 'isms' and so forth but he had studied the Holy Qur'an in depth and he used to say that people can bring any point or issue before him and he would prove the truth of the Holy Qur'an and of the Islamic teachings, in relation to that issue, in terms that were understandable by the opponent. This is what he always practised. At times it so happened that he was confronted with something that was completely new to him and he had no knowledge of the trap planned and laid out for him by the questioner a few steps ahead. He would be asked a question, in a deliberate attempt to entrap him, but because he understood the Islamic teaching well and he knew the Holy Qur'an in depth, he could never be trapped by such sudden sporadic attempts by his opponents. For instance, I can quote an example of a visitor from

Australia. This visitor from Australia knew very well that the history of the aborigines dated back to forty thousand years and he also knew very well that according to the Gospels and according to the Qur'anic teachings, as he thought, the history of man extends to only six thousand years back. It is obvious now that he was laying a trap for the Promised Messiah^(as) when he casually asked as to how many years had passed since the time of the Adam from whom we were descended. The Promised Messiah^(as) had in the past repeatedly mentioned that Adam^(as), the Prophet of God, had appeared about six thousand years ago. However, when he was asked this question, the Promised Messiah^(as) replied that if you are talking of the first man who is known to us as the father of mankind, then there may have been many, and the period of some may be as long ago as forty thousand years. Why did he mention the period of forty thousand years? The Promised Messiah^(as) had no knowledge at that time of the history of the aborigines and how long they had existed before the arrival of the Europeans in Australia but he knew the Holy Qur'an – that is what is so amazing. He knew that the first man

was not born six thousand years ago, but that he had existed much earlier. When the questioner was a non-Muslim and was not addressing the phenomenon of prophethood, but was addressing the question in ordinary terms of the first man, that is as the father of *homo sapiens*, the Promised Messiah^(as) responded accordingly and answered the question very correctly in the light of the Holy Qur'an.

Some questions cannot be answered in generality and one has to address them from within a specific context. However, before that a much deeper knowledge of the Holy Qur'an must be acquired than is, unfortunately, generally possessed by the Ahmadiyya youth and for that I invite you to study the books of the Promised Messiah^(as). It may be that in places you will find his books to be in conflict with your modern knowledge but when you read more and more you will find that what he, in fact, states is different in meaning to what was initially understood by you. This point is well illustrated by the case in the above example when he spoke of Adam^(as) having been born forty thousand years ago [when at other times he spoke of Adam as having been born six thousand years

ago]. He has repeatedly stated that Adam^(as) was born six thousand years ago and the casual reader who may not be familiar with his response to the question from the Australian visitor, may start to conceive wrong notions about the Promised Messiah^(as) that maybe he is unaware of the history of man which spans a much longer period than the history of Adam^(as). However, if a person persists in reading the books of the Promised Messiah^(as), he will come across passages that will throw light on all his own earlier doubts and he will then begin to appreciate the true extent of knowledge that is contained in the books of the Promised Messiah^(as).

It is highly important for Ahmadies not just to study the books of the Promised Messiah^(as), but to study them intensively and completely. This will enlarge their vision out of all proportion to what they know of the world today.



Muslims in Spain

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By Dr Fareed Ahmad – UK

On the 2nd January 1492 (870 AH), Muhammad XI Abu Abdullah, the last of the Spanish sultans, pulled up rein on the summit of a small hill overlooking the long ridge south-west of Granada.

Gazing for the last time at the lovely city in its green and fertile valley, he burst into tears.

‘You may well weep like a woman,’ his mother exclaimed bitterly, ‘over the city which you could not defend like a man.’

Thus, 780 years after Tariq ibn Zayyad had first established a foothold for Islam, Muslim rule in the fair land of Al-Andalus – Spain finally came to an end.

Spain was conquered by the Romans in the 2nd century BC and was held by them for more than 500 years, until the Visigoths from the north entered and took control. Christianity became the state religion but by the 8th century the Christian clergy had neglected their spiritual role and started interfering

with politics. The Jews and other minorities began to be persecuted and the condition of the general population was woefully neglected.

In 711 (89 AH), in the reign of Al-Walid, Tariq ibn Zayyad, governor of Tangier in North Africa, took the momentous step of crossing the straits and established a beach-head at the foot of the great rock which is named after him, ‘*Jebel al Tariq*’ – Gibraltar (the hill of Tariq).

Tariq’s entry into Spain had limited aims. This is evident from the small size of his force and the manner in which the whole idea of venturing into Spain came about.

When the Muslim armies swept over the provinces of North Africa in the late 7th and early 8th centuries, only the fortress of Cueta on the Moroccan coast opposite Gibraltar held out against them. Like the rest of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, Cueta was under the rule of the Greek emperor in Constantinople but it was so far removed from there that it had to

rely on the neighbouring kingdom of Spain for assistance and protection. As it happened, there was a quarrel at that time between Count Julian the governor of Cueta and Roderick the King of Spain. Count Julian, who needed assistance against Roderick, approached Musa the son of Noseyr, the governor of North Africa, offering a plan for the Muslims to enter Spain. Musa however was cautious and dispatched messengers to the Caliph Al-Walid in Damascus to ask for instructions.

In the meantime he sent a small body of 500 men under Tarif who landed at the place which still bears his name, Tarifa. On his return in July 710 (88 AH) Tarif seems to have reported that Spain was relatively defenceless and also that Count Julian's loyalty to the Muslims could be depended upon. This report does not seem to have been entirely accurate as Tariq was to discover.

Still Musa was not disposed to embark upon a major venture. In the meantime, the Caliph Al-Walid had confirmed his cautious approach and enjoined him on no account to risk the whole Muslim army in

unknown dangers, and had only authorised small expeditions.

Nevertheless, encouraged by Tarif's venture, Musa did resolve on a slightly larger plan and in 711 (89 AH) dispatched Tariq across the straits with an initial force of 8000 men. He was later reinforced by 5000 men making his force 13,000 strong. After capturing Carteya on the coast, Tariq advanced inland when he perceived the whole force of the Goths under King Roderick blocking his path. Far from having entered a 'defenceless' country as Tarif had suggested, the Muslims now faced a formidable army of nearly 80,000 men, six times their number.

When the Muslims saw the mighty army that Roderick had brought against them their hearts sank for a moment. It may have been prudent and not at all cowardly for Tariq to make a tactical retreat and await additional reinforcements before tackling this immense army but instead he cried aloud, 'Men before you is the enemy, and the sea is at your backs. By Allah, there is no escape for you save in valour and resolution.' This is where Tariq burnt the boats so there could be no turning back. His soldiers were now

fully motivated and they plucked up courage and shouted 'We will follow thee, O Tariq.'

The two armies met at Guadalete near Cape Trafalgar on the banks of a little river called Wady Bekka close to where it entered the sea. The battle was extremely hard fought. For one week the fighting raged. The day after the last engagement, the horse and sandals of the enemy king, Roderick, were found on the river-bank. The king was never heard of again and his army fled.

Against the cautionary instructions of Musa, the victorious Tariq pushed on without delay dividing his forces into three brigades. The victorious Muslims marched forward and everywhere the Jews, slaves and the common people hailed them as deliverers. Malaga, and Granada were taken and one of his officers Mugith took Cordoba with hardly a blow being struck. The city was left in the keeping of the Jews who had proved themselves allies of the Muslim in the campaign.

Tariq himself pressed on towards Toledo, the capital of the Goths. In the summer of 712 (90 AH) Musa

himself crossed with 18,000 men and after capturing Carmona, Seville, and Merida arrived in Toledo where he is said to have strongly reprimanded Tariq for his rashness.

It is clear that it was not due to jealousy of the success of his general that Musa dealt so severely with Tariq as historians have claimed. Musa was a careful administrator who was concerned for the Muslims and their armies, and did not want them to become over-stretched and he had shown himself to be meticulous in consulting with and respecting the advice of the Caliph in Damascus.

By the autumn of 713 (91 AH) most of Spain was in Muslim hands. In the meantime, Al-Walid recalled both Musa and Tariq from Spain and although acknowledging their exploits, did not allow them to further their efforts on the Spanish peninsula.

Al-Walid died and was succeeded by his brother Suleiman whose short two years' rule only heralded the succession of his cousin, Umar ibn Abdul Aziz ibn Marwan, one of the great leaders and reformers of Islam.

A year after his accession, the Muslim forces in Spain crossed the Pyrenees into France and captured Narbonne. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz died at the age of 39 and the leadership passed to Yazid II and in 724 (AH 102) to Hisham whose rule lasted 19 years.

During this period, the Muslim armies swept northwards towards Paris and eastward to Italy. In 732 (110 AH), exactly 100 years after the death of the Holy Prophet^(sa), the Muslim forces under Abdur Rahman ibn Abdullah were defeated by the Frankish army under Charles Martel. Abdur Rahman was martyred on the battlefield. This battle was less decisive than has sometimes been claimed. The force led by Abdur Rahman was in essence a frontier garrison stationed at the limits of the Muslim empire. In fact Muslim armies remained stationed in Provence throughout the late 730's.

As to how the newly conquered peoples in Spain were treated can be gauged from the agreement which the Muslims made with a certain Theodemir. The administrative document survives only in much later copies but is agreed by all scholars to be reliable. It is the text

of a treaty made between Abdul Aziz and Theodemir, and it is dated 4 Rajab 94 or 5th April 713.

Theodemir was the lord of seven named towns in the south-east of Spain, including Alicante on the coast and places in its hinterland such as Lorca and Orihuela. In return for their submission Theodemir and his people were promised their personal safety and the free practice of the Christian faith in their churches. Theodemir himself was confirmed in his lordship. In return he and his people were not to give aid to deserters or enemies of the conquerors, and they were required to pay an annual poll tax partly in money (one silver dinar) and partly in goods or produce.

By 720 (AH 98) all the lands under the control of the Visigothic kings had been pacified and it should be borne in mind that these lands comprised not just the Iberian peninsula but also the Visigothic province of Septimania, that is to say the area of Mediterranean France stretching from the Pyrenees to Provence which was then administered from Narbonne.

It is about this time that we hear first mention of the dissension caused by

the clergy in the North African region which would have a serious effect on events in Spain. In 741 (109 AH), they created mischief against the Arab governors in North Africa and set the Berbers in revolt. Thirty thousand troops from Syria had to be called in upon an attempt to restore order but they were repulsed. The Berbers in Spain decided to support their kinsmen and began a revolt in Spain. Abd-el-Malik, governor of Spain called in the Syrian auxiliaries and the revolt was eventually put down.

Nevertheless, new internal rivalries seem to have been fomented, Abd-el-Malik was murdered and hostile factions and divisions appeared. The Caliph of Damascus sent a new and able governor who banished the rival groups in settlements far apart. The Egyptian contingent of the Syrian army was settled in Murcaia which they re-named 'Misr'; the Palestinians were sent to Sidonia and Algericas; the Jordanians to Malaga and those of Damascus to Granada.

Party rivalries smouldered on and they continued to quarrel among themselves until by a twist of circumstances their master arrived from the east.

When the Umayyads were overthrown in Syria, one Umayyad 20 years old Abdur Rahman, 'the Falcon of the Quraish', escaped, and after five years as a fugitive and many adventures, he arrived in north-western Africa where he was given refuge.

Now about 25 years of age, his mental powers were considerable and to these he added the advantages of a noble stature and great physical energy and courage.

He sent delegations to Spain to see if he would be welcome there. It is said that Abdur Rahman was engrossed in prayers on the sea shore when he saw the vessel approach which brought him good news. The name of the first envoy from Andalusia who was presented to him was Abu-Ghalib Temmam (which means Father of Conquest and Attainment) and Abdur Rahman considered this name so significant that he took it as a Sign from Allah and an answer to his prayers. He proclaimed 'We shall attain our object and conquer the land.'

Abdur Rahman now decided to cross over to Spain and through the respect of the Umayyad name, he

rallied together a vast army and landed on the Spanish coast at Almunecar in September 755 (AH 133). For the next few months, Abdur Rahman organised his forces. Tall, lean, red-haired with large blue eyes and a winning smile Abdur Rahman entered Cordoba in triumph on 14th May, 756 (AH 134), established his residence there, and changed the course of Spanish history. The dynasty of the Umayyads in Cordoba which he founded was destined to endure for nearly three centuries.

For 32 years Abdur Rahman (756–788 AH 134–166) ruled and developed the country and founded the remarkable dynasty which endured for 250 years and made possible a wonder of the world, the civilisation of the Muslims in Spain. He united the communities and embarked on vast building projects for the welfare of his people. Bridges, roads, public baths, systems to provide ample running water and mosques were constructed everywhere.

The greatness of his achievement is all the more considerable because his rule was one of perpetual struggle and consolidation.

Although he managed to take control of Toledo and its region in the years 761–64 (AH 139–142), he had to defend himself against rival contenders there as late as the year 785 (AH 163). Seville and the south-west were not securely under his control until the mid-770s. Not until about 780 (AH 158) was he master of the Ebro valley and the north-east.

Even the Abbasides from whom he had escaped were not content to allow to him to live in peace. One of the most critical events in his early rule was the invasion by an Abbaside army which Abdur Rahman defeated with a great display of personal courage. The Caliph Mansur is reported to have commended his foe with the words, which in fact sum up the character of Abdur Rahman:

‘Wonderful is the daring, wisdom, and prudence he has shown! To enter the paths of destruction, throw himself into a distant land, hard to approach, and well defended; there to profit by the jealousies of the rival parties, to make them turn their arms against one another instead of against himself; to win

the homage and obedience of his subjects; and, having overcome every difficulty, to rule supreme lord of all! Of a truth, no man before him has done this.'

In 786 (AH 164), two years before he died, he founded the great mosque of Cordoba; (Arabic translation QURTABA). Since the 16th century this mosque has housed within it a Roman Catholic cathedral. Yet, in spite of this and although all trace of Muslim religious practice has been wiped out in Spain for nearly 400 years, it is still referred to on the city's signposts and in the official guidebooks as 'La Mezquita'. It is said that when the Hapsburg Holy Roman emperor Charles V (Carlos I in Spain) was shown the finished church inside the mosque he cried out in anguish to those who had built it, 'You have destroyed something which exists nowhere to create something which could be found everywhere.'

Abdur Rahman's son who followed him, Hisham, was a firm ruler. He gave the people many public buildings and had the cities patrolled at night. He personally walked through the streets of Cordoba to

mix with the populace to learn their problems and their needs. Often he visited the poor in their homes and nursed the sick himself. Scholars were welcomed at his court and eminent men of science were placed in important government positions.

Four good emirs followed Hisham, Hakam I, Abd-ur-Rahman II (822-852 200-230 AH), Muhammad I (852-886 230-264 AH), Mundhir (886-888 AH 264-266). Learning and science developed and the people prospered. During these tranquil years, many slaves and people from the middle classes joined the Muslims soon to be followed by the Christian aristocracy who found in Islam a vital religion which encouraged education, good government, brotherhood and social justice. The Muslim policy of religious freedom incurred the jealousy and scepticism of the Christian nations. Indeed, even as late as 1602 (980 AH), the Archbishop of Valencia told Philip III of Spain that the Muslims must be driven from the country because 'they commend nothing as much as liberty of conscience, in all matters of religion, which the Turks, and all other Muhammadans suffer yet their subjects enjoy.'

In 888 (266 AH), Abdullah the seventh Emir of the Spanish Umayyad dynasty, inherited the throne but his rule was weak and his territories were gradually annexed by his enemies.

Abdullah died in 912 (290 AH), that is 200 years after Tariq's landing, and his grandson, 22 year old Abdur Rahman III, became king. Of the many monarchs who ruled Spain, no one was greater than him.

Abdur Rahman set about at once to consolidate the nation and taking personal command of the army retrieved the lost possessions in a long campaign lasting 18 years. By 930 (308 AH) Spain was fully under his control and on the occasion of the Friday prayer on 16th January 929 (307 AH) Abdur Rahman now took on the title 'Khalifa' and his subjects in wonder and respect added 'Great'. His 'laqab' or honorific name was al-Nasir li-dini 'illah 'he who fights victoriously for the faith of Allah'.

Abdur Rahman's court in Cordoba was among the most grand in history. Accredited to it were envoys from the Byzantine emperor and from the courts of Germany,

France and Italy. Cordoba's population – today a mere 250,000 – then numbered 800,000 There were 700 mosques and 300 public baths at a time when the European races still regarded bathing as a heathen custom. The streets - ten miles of them – were paved and lit, a development which London and Paris were not to enjoy for another seven centuries. There were 70 libraries housing over 400,000 volumes. The rulers of neighbouring countries sent to Cordoba if they needed a doctor or an architect, not to France or Germany. Cordoba University attracted students from all over the then known world and was acknowledged as the centre of learning.

The university was one of Abdur Rahman's concepts, along with many of the hundreds of mosques, but undoubtedly his most beautiful work was the magnificent marble palace and administrative centre a few miles from Cordoba which it is claimed was named after his wife al-Zahra.

Today all that remains are the foundations and a few walls and floors (see cover) of the palace and

the royal suburb that grew up around it. All the rest was carted off after the Christian conquest in the 15th century to build the vast pink monastery of San Geronimo in the hills above.

During this golden period, the Muslims were responsible for the 'Green revolution' created by the introduction of new crops into Spain. By the middle of the 10th century there had been acclimatised there among others: rice, hard wheat, sorghum, sugar-cane, cotton, oranges, lemons, limes, bananas, pomegranates, spinach, water-melons, spinach, artichoke and aubergine.

The Great Khalifa reigned for 49 years, and died in 961 (339 AH). Among his papers was found one on which he had recorded the days of his reign that were free from sorrow: 14 days. He commented, 'O man of understanding, wonder and observe how small a portion of unclouded happiness the world can give even to the most fortunate.'

Hakim II, Abdur Rahman's son succeeded to the throne and ruled beneficently for 15 years. After his death in 976 (354 AH), the country

was ruled by a triumvirate as Hisham III was only 11 years old. Al-Mansur became the leading figure and prime minister in this ruling committee and united the country and consolidated the power and strength of the Muslims with a series of over 57 campaigns against the Christians. His son Abdul Malik Muzaffar maintained the unity of the kingdom and ruled firmly till 1008 (386 AH).

What happened between 1008 (386 AH) and 1031(409 AH) was fitna – disorder. Various factions engaged in a power struggle in which the Caliphs were used as puppets and enthroned and dethroned in quick succession. By the year 1031(409 AH), the Caliphate was extinct and Al-Andalus was plunged into total anarchy. The whole episode was ostensibly instigated by the Mullahs. That they were behind this mischief is evident from the sad story of the pitiful treatment meted out to Hisham III the last of the Umayyads in Spain.

By order of the chief men of the city, evidently the Mullahs, this mild and humane prince was dragged with his family to a dismal vault attached to the great mosque at Cordoba.

Stanley Lane-Poole in *The Moors in Spain* narrates that:

Here, in total darkness, half frozen with the cold and damp, and poisoned by the foul air of the place, the poor Caliph sat, holding his only child, a little girl, to his breast, while his wives hung round him in scanty clothing, weeping, shivering, and dishevelled. They had been long without food, and their inhuman jailers had left them unnoticed for hours. The sheykhs then came to announce to Hisham the decision of the council which had been hastily summoned to debate upon his fate; but the poor Caliph, who was trying to restore a little warmth to the child in his arms, interrupted them: "Yes! yes! I will submit to their decision; whatever it is; but for God's sake get me some bread; this poor child is dying of hunger.

Remarkably, Stanley Lane-Poole tells us that:

The Sheykhs were touched – they had not designed such torments – and the bread was brought.

(Evidently these Mullahs were only

the product of the 3rd century, not the 14th regarding whom the Holy Prophet^(sa) had predicted would be the worst of creation. Perhaps that is why they had some spark of humanity left in them.)

Then they began again: 'Sire, they have determined that you shall be taken at daybreak to be imprisoned in such and such a fortress.'

'So be it,' answered the Caliph, 'I have only one favour to ask: permit us to have a lantern, for the darkness of this dismal place appals us.'

The lord spiritual and temporal of the Muslims in Spain had fallen to such straits that he had to beg for bread and a candle.

Now, a number of petty kingdoms took shape as the country slid into anarchy and the breakdown of the unified Al-Andalus gave ample scope and opportunity to the Christian principalities of Castile and Leon, Aragon and Navarre to make further inroads into the Muslim domains.

As Stanley Lane-Poole observes, the Christian ruler Alfonso VI

understood his part perfectly. He saw that he only had to allow the various Muslim princes rope enough, and they would proceed to hang themselves with the utmost expedition.

Some of these Muslim rulers were not even averse to fall at the feet of Alfonso if they felt threatened by a more powerful rival. The Muslim states became in effect tributaries of the King of Castile and paid tribute as the price of friendship. Over the years, Alfonso demanded higher and higher payments and the Muslims seemed blind to the fact that he was cleverly storing up for the great conquest which he had in mind.

On 25th May 1085 (463 AH), Alfonso VI took the old Spanish capital of Toledo and which had become the centre of Muslim science and learning. Held for 372 years, Toledo was never to be recovered by the Muslims. It was a disaster which significantly weakened their power base in Spain. At last the unifying power of Islam came to the aid of the Muslims as they suddenly woke to the monster they had created. They sought help across the straits from the

Almoravide King Yusuf ibn Tashfin who responded by bringing a strong army into Spain and on 23rd October 1086 (464 AH) he confronted and then annihilated Alfonso VI's army at Zallaka.

Yusuf returned to North Africa until in 1090 (468 AH) he acceded to a request from the King of Seville to ward off another Christian attack. This time he found himself having to contend not just with the Christians but the Muslim princes who were causing havoc in the land. Yusuf decided to deal with them and in doing so brought about a revival in Muslim fortunes in Spain. Before the year was out, he had entered Granada in November and had taken Tarifa in December. The next year Seville fell and with the fall of Valencia in 1104 (482 AH) the whole of Muslim Spain with the exception of Toledo had become a province of the great African empire of the Almoravides. The founder of the Almoravides was Ibn Yasin who in about 1039 (417 AH) founded a ribat or religious community and his followers came to be known as the people of the ribat al-Mirabitun. His members initially devoted themselves to living a pure and ascetic life and to educating people

regarding the faith but it seems that the extremist Mullah elements took control and very soon they became a military order and overran the country by force of arms. Eventually, moderation prevailed and they gave rise to great leaders like Yusuf ibn Tashfin. The most significant effect of the coming of the Almoravids was the reunification of al-Andalus and their conquest of the Ghana Empire.

The arrival of the Almoravides in Spain served only as a temporary check to the advances of the Christians. The rot caused by the earlier faction fighting continued and Saragossa fell on the 18th December 1118 (496 AH) to Alfonso of Aragon. This was the year that events were taking place in North Africa which would destine the end of the Almoravides. Muhammad ibn Tumart founded the Almohad movement having convinced himself that he had a mission to reform what he considered were the corruptions and excesses of the Almoravids. In 1121 (499 AH) he was proclaimed the Mahdi by his followers.

In 1145 (523 AH) Almohad forces under Abdul Mu'min defeated an

Almoravid army at Tlemcen. The Almoravid ruler Tasfin ben Ali died and the Almohads gained support among Berber groups as the Almoravid rulers began to lose their hold over Spain. Then in 1147 (525 AH) Marrakesh fell to Almohad forces, ending almost a century of Almoravid rule in North Africa. In 1150 (528 AH) they crossed into Al-Andalus to conquer it during the years 1171–73 (549–552 AH).

By this time the three major Christian powers – Leon-Castile, Aragon-Catalona and the new kingdom of Portugal were formidably strong. In 1163 (541 AH), Abu Yaqub Yusuf II began a Muslim revival with some successful campaigns to push back the Christian advance.

His son, Abu Yusuf Yaqub, heavily defeated Alfonso VIII of Castile at Alarcos in 1195 (573 AH), but after him his grandson, the gentle Muhammad al-Nasir, could no longer stem the Christian tide. It seems that the Mullahs again were exerting a powerful influence on the course of events in Spain as is seen by the action taken against Ibn Rushd.

Stanley Lane-Poole relates that:

Abu Yusuf Yaqub was it seems obliged 'by the necessities of his situation' to yield to the demands of the enemies of the great and respected scholar Ibn Rushd and remove him from his position as Chief Qadi of Cordoba. Orders were given that his books should be burned, and he was forced to remove from Cordoba and take up residence at al-Yusana (Lucena).....Other persons whose views were obnoxious were also persecuted at the same time. Ibn Rushd did not escape from rough handling by the crowd, but he survived his exile and after the return of the Almohad Caliph to Africa was restored to favour.

These factors no doubt and other dissensions within the Muslim forces caused the disaster at al-Uqab (a few miles north-east of Pedroabad). The Christian forces concentrated in Toledo and a final and decisive battle was fought on 16th July 1212 (590 AH), better known in European history as Las Navas de Tolosa. The battle was long and desperately contested, but ultimately the Muslims were defeated. Many thousands of

Muslims were slaughtered in cold blood after King Alfonso's victory.

Las Navas de Tolosa was the Waterloo of Muslim rule in Spain, exactly five centuries after its conquest by Tariq. The real victim was the refined and the cultured civilisation of Muslim Andalus, still, even in its decadence, far in advance of Europe. Yet, it was to survive for nearly three more centuries in the kingdom of Granada and continue its role of spreading knowledge and refinement to the emerging nations of the West.

In 1232 (610 AH) the Nasrid dynasty came to power in Granada with the accession of Muhammad I. The cream of Muslim intellect and soldiery came from far afield to pledge themselves to the last remaining Muslim king and this influx contributed to Granada becoming a strong and prosperous state. Muhammad I was a vigorous sovereign but he could not withstand the power of the Christians who now held nearly the whole of Spain.

Cordoba fell in 1236 (614 AH), Valencia in 1238 (616 AH) and Seville on 2nd November 1248 (626 AH) but Granada, under the control

HEMMED IN WITHIN THE ENCLAVE OF GRANADA, MUSLIM GENIUS MASTERFULLY ENGINEERED THE WONDER AND THE BEAUTY WHICH IS THE ALHAMBRA: AL HAMRA – THE RED PALACE. AND THREE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT MINDS OF ANY AGE BELONG TO THIS PERIOD: IBN RUSHD ... WHOM THE WEST KNOWS AS AVERROES, HAILED AS THE GREATEST PHILOSOPHER OF ISLAM; MUHYI'D-DIN IBN AL-'ARABI PERHAPS THE GREATEST OF ALL THE MUSLIM MYSTICS, AND IBN KHALDUN THE MOST PENETRATING OF ALL THE MUSLIM HISTORIANS.

of Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Nasir, held out defiantly to produce an even more thriving and fruitful culture. Hemmed in within the enclave of Granada, Muslim genius masterfully engineered the wonder and the beauty which is the Alhambra: Al Hamra – the Red Palace. And three of the most brilliant minds of any age belong to this period: Ibn Rushd (1128–98, 506-576 AH), whom the West knows as Averroes, hailed as the greatest philosopher of Islam; Muhyi'd-Din Ibn al-'Arabi (1165–1240, 543–618 AH), perhaps the greatest of all the Muslim mystics, and Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406 710–784 AH) the most penetrating of all the Muslim historians.

In 1469, the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon with Isabella of Castile at last opened the way to the unity of Christian Spain. The final cause of the fall of Granada was the folly, disunity and ultimate treachery of the leading members of the royal family who fought among themselves as the Christians tightened their grip, until, in 1492, Granada fell and Muhammad XI Abu Abdullah 'Boabdil' rode up the small hill to gaze dejectedly at what had truly been one of the wonders of the world.

It was a shameful capitulation in stark contrast to the deeds of valour of Muslim officers and soldiers who fought heroically till the bitter end, preferring martyrdom to abject surrender as will be described shortly.

Boabdil had initially shown some degree of courage when he actually went out on an excursion against the Christians but as luck would have it, he was defeated, captured and taken to Cordoba. The Catholic sovereigns received him with honour and induced him to become their instrument and vassal

As Stanley Lane-Poole has observed, 'innocuous as he was in himself, he might become dangerous in the hands of a clever adversary; and events showed that Boabdil's subjection to Ferdinand contributed as much as any other cause to the overthrow of Muslim power in Andalusia.'

On his return to Granada, Boabdil deposed his father Abu'l Hassan who had assumed authority in his absence and retook control of his kingdom. His father managed to oust him again sending Boabdil into exile. Then his uncle Ez-Zaghal came onto the scene in whom we see the last notable Muslim leader of Andalusia. He was a gallant warrior, a firm ruler, and a resolute opponent of the Christians but he was fighting a war on two fronts. In fact his nephew Boabdil had blindly signed a despicable agreement with

Ferdinand that if the Christian king could dispose of Ez-Zaghal, then he could have Granada.

After a series of valiant engagements, at times victory being taken from his grasp by the intervention of Boabdil's troops on the side of the Christians, Ez-Zaghal was finally forced to concede defeat. All his heroism seem to have been ground in the dust in his ignominious surrender.

Boabdil was well pleased at his uncle's defeat until Ferdinand reminded him of his agreement to surrender Granada.

Boabdil did not know what to reply but the people of Granada, led by Musa, a brave and gallant general, took the matter into their own hands and told his Catholic Majesty that if he wanted their arms, he must come and take them. It is this Musa and his comrades whom we see as the last great heroes of Islam in Spain and in whom we see rekindled the fighting spirit and valour of Tariq and his army who had come in the name of Islam eight centuries before.

For two desperate years, this gallant band fought off Ferdinand and his

IN ALL THE LONG HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS WARS, NO INCIDENTS WERE MORE SHAMEFUL THAN THE PERJURIES COMMITTED BY CHRISTIAN RULERS AND THE RAVAGES AND TERRORS OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION. THE EXTENSIVE LIBRARIES OF GRANADA WITH THEIR PRICELESS BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS WERE BURNED TO THE GROUND. IN THE FRENZY OF CHRISTIAN FANATICISM, THE JEWS SUFFERED THE SAME FATE AS THE MUSLIMS. IN THE CENTURY FOLLOWING THE PLEDGE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, THREE MILLION MUSLIMS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN EXECUTED OR BANISHED.

troops until in April 1491 (869 AH) the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella converged on Granada. The gates of the city were in the charge of Musa. In an extraordinary show of bravery, Musa threw them open.

‘Our bodies,’ he said ‘will bar the gates. We have nothing to fight for but the ground we stand on; without that we are without home or country.’

With such an exemplary general, the Muslim soldiers rallied together and made ready to fight and die with him. For six months, these gallant men held off the invaders heroically but the effect of the siege was taking its toll on some of the fickle citizens of Granada. They implored Boabdil to make terms and at last the unlucky king gave way.

There was one last majestic act of courage and defiance before the city gave in. The brave and heroic Musa would be no party to the surrender. If Tariq ibn Zayyad had been there, he would have admired him. Arming himself, Musa mounted his horse and rode out from the city where it is said he was challenged by a party of Christian knights, half a score strong. He slew many of them before he was unhorsed, and then, disdaining their offers of mercy, fought stubbornly upon his knees, till he was too weak to continue the struggle and finally was martyred in the defence of Muslim Spain. No doubt the tears which come to our eyes at the brave death of Musa are more painful and heart-rending than those cast by Boabdil on his capitulation.

On the 25th November 1491, an agreement was signed in which a term was fixed during which a truce was to be observed after which should no aid come from outside, Granada was to be delivered up. In vain, the Muslims watched for a sign of the help they had sought from the Sultans of Turkey and Egypt. No aid came and at the end of December, Boabdil sent a message to Ferdinand to come and take possession of the city.

At the foot of the Hill of Martyrs, Boabdil, attended by a small band of horsemen, met the royal procession. He gave Ferdinand the keys of Granada and turning his back upon his beloved city, passed on to the mountains. Three months later, on 17th April 1492, at the little town of Santa Fe, five miles outside Granada, the Catholic sovereigns signed the charter which enabled Christopher Columbus to discover America. In 1497, five years later, Vasco da Gama sailed round Africa to India. Spain was therefore, launched on a career of discovery and conquest with the credit for Spanish enthusiasm, heroism and science owing much to the Muslims.

The Catholic majesties did not long

keep their pledge to protect the rights of the conquered Muslims. Seven years after the surrender, a campaign of forced conversions was instituted. In all the long history of religious wars, no incidents were more shameful than the perjuries committed by Christian rulers and the ravages and terrors of the Spanish inquisition. The extensive libraries of Granada with their priceless books and manuscripts were burned to the ground. In the frenzy of Christian fanaticism, the Jews suffered the same fate as the Muslims. In the century following the pledge of religious freedom, three million Muslims are believed to have been executed or banished.

Spain never again rose to the heights she had attained under the Muslims who had fashioned her into a land of peace and plenty, brought equity and justice and tolerance to reign, and lit a torch of culture in the fair land of Al-Andalus that illumined the world for centuries.



Prospects and Challenges of the New Millennium: The Moral Factor

This article is based on the opening address delivered by Maulvi A. Wahab Adam (Ameer and Missionary-in-charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana on the occasion of the 72nd national Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, held at Bustan-e-Ahmad, Ashongman, Accra on 22nd-24th March 2001).

This is indeed a unique convention: the very first in the new millennium. We cannot thank Allah, our Most Gracious and Ever Merciful God, enough for enabling us to assemble here today to extol His name and glorify Him for His favours upon us.

Leaders

Barely three months ago, when as a people, we had been called upon to choose our leaders, you could imagine the tension, the anxiety, the anguish and the uncertainty! We seemed to ask one another: Can we go through it successfully? Then all of a sudden, the dark clouds dispersed. Despair had been turned into hope! The world paused to take note and to declare that this is Ghana's finest hour!

Personality

One of the personalities who helped to write this extraordinary history of Ghana in the new millennium is here with us today: His Excellency, Mr. John Agyekum Kuffour, President of the Republic of Ghana. He has come to celebrate with us the glory of Allah's beneficence.

Your Excellency the President, it gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the entire membership of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission Ghana and on my own behalf to the 72nd National Annual Convention of the Ghana Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission.

The National Annual Conventions are used not only to take stock of our past activities but also to

sensitize our congregation on topical issues and share with our compatriots social, moral and spiritual aspirations as well as concerns of our dear nation.

Theme

Having just entered the new millennium, the theme selected for this year's Convention is appropriately: 'Prospects and Challenges of the New Millennium: The Moral Factor'.

Without doubt the new millennium is of very great significance to mankind. While some prophets of doom have got their credulous followers to sell off all their possessions in anticipation of an abrupt end of the world, there is also the perception that this is going to be an era of the proverbial milk and honey during which the lion will be playing with the sheep!

Whether the world will be brought to an abrupt end or be favoured with an unprecedented bliss will depend upon man himself and his preparedness or otherwise to heed the voice of his Maker.

Prophecies

Prophecies about the latter days abound in the Scriptures of all the major religions of the world.

Earthquakes, political and social upheavals, commercialisation of religion, pestilence and widespread immorality and corruption were among the predictions.

There was also a stress in the selfsame prophecies that the Ever Merciful Allah Who created us loves us. He would not abandon the world to its fate. He would, out of compassion for mankind, cause to appear the Promised One who would guide man aright socially, morally and spiritually.

That the signs of the appearance of the Promised One have been fulfilled is beyond dispute. If there is any doubt, it is about the person, the exact time of his advent and the form that the appearance would take.

Hope

It is here that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community holds out a message of hope for the whole of mankind. The message is, the long

awaited Promised Messiah^(as) and Mahdi, the Guided One, has indeed made his appearance in the person of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian. He founded the Community in accord with Divine Command in 1889.

He exhorted his followers to hold fast to the Holy Qur'an and the practice of the Holy Prophet of Islam, on whom be peace and blessings of Allah, and charged them to constantly strive towards moral and spiritual excellence.

There is no gain saying the fact that there has been a tremendous advancement of science and technology in our time. It has even been claimed that the Genetic Blueprint has been discovered by scientists. These developments hold great prospects for mankind in the 21st century.

Challenges

On the other hand, man's morality has not kept pace with his scientific and technological advancement. Man has alienated himself from his God. This has given rise to materialism, permissiveness, envy, greed, arrogance, immorality and

corruption leading to conflicts, unrest, human rights abuse as well as deadly diseases notable among which is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Such are the challenges of the new millennium.

The fact is, the new millennium holds for mankind at once, great hopes and tremendous challenges. Today some dare to claim that God is dead.

Material Goods

Today man considers material goods to be more precious than human life and dignity.

The fact that man has invented a weapon whose primary objective is to wipe out humans and leave material goods intact is one evidence.

In some countries, precious lives are taken and human limbs used in rituals to generate wealth to purchase material goods!

That, it is believed, accounts for the shameful serial killing of innocent women in our country today.

Such is the level of greed for

material goods which must be acquired at all cost, through means, fair or foul, but mostly foul.

Mutual rivalry in seeking worldly increase diverts you from God till you reach the graves.

(Holy Qur'an 102:2-3)

Corruption

No wonder corruption has become so rampant. But Mr. Chairman, corruption saps the economic energy of a nation as AIDS destroys the immune system of a human being.

It does not only starve the nation of foreign investment. It also creates such mistrust in the Government that citizens refuse to give of their best to the nation. Why should an investor put his money where it will be squandered?

It is said that when Korea needed a loan to boost its economy, she called on its citizens to part with whatever they could afford in the form of loans to sustain the national economy. According to an eye-witness account, Koreans literally queued to offer loans to their Government! Why would they do

that if they were convinced that the loans would find their way into private pockets?

It is apparent, therefore, that no meaningful national economic programme is possible without the eradication of corruption or at least its reduction to the barest minimum.

That is why, Mr. President, your famous 'zero tolerance for corruption' pronouncement and the promise to set a personal example are so significant. In fact they hold the key to the future of our dear country if indeed members of your Government and all Ghanaians will help translate them into actuality.

So is it appropriate to have a Code of Ethics to guide members of Government and, for that matter, all Ghanaians: A Code of Ethics whose ultimate aim should be a the total and complete transformation of the attitudes of Ghanaians.

Belief in Allah

This should start with our concept of God and His unity, for while belief in God is the beginning of wisdom, belief in the oneness of God is the beginning of the unity of

all men, irrespective of race, colour or creed. This should then be followed by our concept of man, his life and dignity. This is so because governance is about man and his dignity.

According to the Holy Qur'an, man is the vicegerent of Allah on earth:

And remember when thy Lord said to the angels, I am about to create man from dry ringing clay, from black mud wrought into shape; So when I have fashioned him in perfection and have breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in submission to him.

(Holy Qur'an 15: vs.29-30)

If angels were commanded to make obeisance to man, then men should also respect each another. Had there been respect for human life and dignity there would not be serial killing of innocent women-nor defilement of innocent children.

Respect

So we should have respect for one another. In simple terms, we should learn to say 'please' and 'thank you' to one another.

Saying 'please' shows that we have respect for one another while saying 'thank you' is an indication of our appreciation for service rendered.

The Holy Prophet of Islam, on whom be peace and blessings of Allah is reported to have said:

'He who does not show gratitude to man cannot show gratitude to Allah'.

(Bukhari)

These are simple messages but they speak volumes of the moral values of a people.

If today, all Ghanaians learned to say 'thank you' and 'please' to one another with a smile, you can imagine the type of society we would be building for ourselves and posterity: society in which each one is accorded due respect irrespective of his or her tribal, religious or political affiliation or station in life.

Time

Another challenge that faces us as a people is our total disregard of time. I vividly recall that when 'Integrity Workshop' was held in

Accra some time back, one of the factors identified as constituting corruption in the country was our disregard of time.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

By the Fleeting Time, surely man is in a state of loss.

(Holy Qur'an 103: vs.2-3)

One interpretation of the Qur'anic verses is, time waits for no man and that those who ignore time will be in loss. We are late to start functions. We are late to get to our offices and yet are in a hurry to close.

It has been rightly pointed out that it is our lack of sense of time that accounts for the fact that not a single public clock in our cities gives correct time! The tragedy is, it draws the entire nation back in our developmental effort. Let us as a nation consciously develop our own type of punctuality – Ghanaian punctuality – which would mean strictly keeping to time.

If we consider the fact that one-half of our lives is spent in sleep, we would realize that it would be a

height of ingratitude to Allah to waste even a second of the rest of the divine gift of time.

Game of Chance

Then at our offices, a good portion of working hours is used in working lotto!

Let us, for once, agree that lotto is a game of chance, not a transaction based on sophisticated scientific calculations!

Let us also accept the fact that it is contradictory in terms to demand hard work from the populace while we, at the same time, encourage them to adopt the easy course of getting rich quick through lotto.

The Holy Qur'an says:

And that man will have nothing but what he strives for.

(Holy Qur'an Ch.53:v.40)

It may appear that a lot of revenue accrues to the State through the game of chance. What we fail to realize is the incalculable loss we cause to the State by corrupting the work ethics of a whole populace through lotto.

Waste

Another challenge which is closely related to time is waste. Consider the endless time that able bodied youth spend under trees in our towns and villages either gossiping or playing cards. Such youths can engage themselves in useful ventures if only they could be helped to organize themselves to help themselves.

So do we waste water and electric power in a number of ways?

Apart from its cost to the nation, have we ever considered the fact that while some of our brethren have no water to drink and also sleep in darkness, it is immoral to waste water and electric power?

It is for these reasons that Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV, the present Supreme Head of the world-wide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has issued a stern warning to Ahmadi Muslims all over the world, especially those in the developing countries, to ensure that they do not waste a single drop of water or electric power.

Extravagance

Connected with this is the challenge of extravagant funerals. The time and resources that go into funerals of the dead while orphans cry for money to pay school fees and widows struggle to eke a living should be considered as unhelpful in the harsh economic realities of our time.

Fortunately, almost all the Traditional Councils of our country have enacted laws against extravagant funerals and yet, sadly, the courage to implement them is lacking!

We need also to change our attitude towards our surroundings. Most of us would remember the sanitary inspector who would go from house to house to see if the pot of water in the house had a lid on it, if our courtyard had been swept and if our general surroundings were spick and span. A similar exercise awaited us in school when our nails, teeth and even singlets underneath our shirts would be inspected.

The Holy Prophet of Islam, on whom be peace and blessings of

Allah is reported to have said:

‘Cleanliness is part of faith’.
(*Bukhari*)

Contrast this with the present filth in our towns and cities and you will agree with me that we need to go back to the ‘good old days’ when each citizen did his or her bit to keep our country clean. Added to this is the habit of planting trees and flowers as we were made to cultivate during our school days.

We would then be showing appreciation for God’s gifts of nature and with it we would be ensuring our own general well-being and the preservation of life.

Confidence

Finally, there is the challenge of lack of confidence in ourselves as Africans. It is often said: ‘Blackman! What can you expect?’

Significantly, at the threshold of the new millennium, fossils, six million years old, have been discovered in East Africa which have furnished the world with the incontrovertible evidence that Africa is the cradle of mankind.

Today, it is generally accepted by eminent professors of archaeology, sociology, history, and anthropology that life did begin in Africa.

Africans were the first to have faced the challenges of a harsh environment and so they invented useful tools for survival and developed the science of domesticating animals, the art of farming etc. and then spread out to other continents to share with them their knowledge and experiences as well as their civilization and culture.

Coming closer home, it is acknowledged by no less a historian than Ibn Khaldun that the old empire of Ghana was, as far back as a thousand years ago, a great civilization with well developed institutions and culture whose people were very hospitable and humane.

Ghana comes from the Arabic root Ghinaa which means free, independent and rich.

It is a well known fact that the founding fathers of modern Ghana decided to re-name the Gold Coast

Ghana so that the people of this country will be inspired to dream great dreams, do great things and achieve great feats.

The Holy Qur'an is replete with examples of the rise and fall of nations. Those nations that heed Allah's warnings and cling to the principles enunciated by Allah for self preservation have no cause to despair. Knowing the contribution that we as Africans have made to the world gives us the impetus to strive to the utmost to achieve the loftiest heights destined for man.

Attitudes

The Holy Qur'an admonishes us in these words:

Surely, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts.

(Holy Qur'an, Ch.13:v.12)

If there should be any success in our bid to transform the attitudes of Ghanaians, there would be a need for a systematic public education based on careful research into our social norms and traditional and religious inclinations, well

packaged for the information of the general populace.

Though the print and electronic media are helpful in the dissemination of information, for obvious reasons, it is suggested that the erstwhile cinema vans should be re-introduced. Manned by dedicated teams, they should be made to penetrate the hinterland to inform the populace of the need to adopt such social values as are relevant to our time, including implicit faith in God, respect for human life and dignity, the need to keep to time always, the need to avoid waste and the degradation of the environment, adopting abstinence as remedy against the AIDS menace, the dangers to the country of corruption, and how very important it is for each one of us to give of our best to make our nation caring, strong and prosperous.

Morality is the small but clear voice that warns us against acts that offend our fellow human beings and God Himself even when we may not be breaking any law of the State.

It is morality that separates human beings from animals since morality enables us to distinguish between right and wrong.

The Ghana Integrity Initiative has prepared a comprehensive report on the history of corruption in this country and I wish to take the liberty to quote just a paragraph:

‘Since independence, Ghana has experienced periodic anti-corruption crusades characterized by strident sermonizing and draconian law enforcement varying from seizure of assets, debarment from holding public office to unusually long prison sentences and even death. Nevertheless, corruption persists, due in large part to diminishing political will during incumbency and weak demand for accountability. Debate is highly politicized whilst the public is deeply cynical about official commitment.’

Expectations

Your Excellency, expectations of the citizenry from Your Government are indeed high. This

may be because of the adage: ‘To whom much is given, much is expected.’ Yes. What you have been given in the form of hard cash may not be much. Nonetheless, what you enjoy in the form of goodwill is tremendous.

You have within reach a rare opportunity to build a nation of which not only Ghanaians but the whole of Africa will be justifiably proud and it will be tragic to let such a golden opportunity slip by.

It is a daunting task, no doubt. Yet given Ghana's natural and material resources it is certainly attainable.
Inshallah.

Assets

Not only members of your Government but all those who hold public office should be made to declare their assets on assumption of office and on leaving office and also abide by the Code of Ethics you plan to initiate for members of your Government and public officials.

The qualities of members of your Government and public officials should include humility, honesty,

transparency and God-fearingness.

Those who are caught indulging in the shameful and unethical acts of economic sabotage of the country should be severely punished to serve as a deterrent to others.

I wish to submit that whatever form corruption may take, economic or otherwise, the most effective remedy is God-consciousness and the conviction that if even one escaped punishment in this world for offending morality, one cannot escape Divine accountability on the Day of Judgement.

No man or woman should therefore allow himself or herself to be coerced by taunts of friends or foes to abandon honesty and taint himself or herself with corruption. It is this realisation that makes one's conscience one's permanent police-man.

First it is most effective in terms of results and second, it costs the State not a single pesewa!

I wish to submit further that it is religion that is capable of producing this consciousness, this conviction.

Ahmadiyya

Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ghana will continue to be peaceful and law-abiding as well as make contributions to the development of the country, especially in the fields of education, health and agriculture. So will the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission Ghana continue to preach unity, tolerance, reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

In conclusion, I wish to welcome, once again, Your Excellency the President to this Convention. I also welcome all our foreign delegates from the U.S., Germany, France, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Benin and you all.

May Allah, out of His Grace, accept in favour of each one of us the fervent prayers offered by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for participants in our Conventions. Amen.

Thank you and may Allah bless us all.



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